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Victorian Philosophies of Useless Work Versus Work for the Mind: Carlyle, Ruskin, Morris, and Marx

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Victorian Philosophies of Useless Work Versus Work for the Mind:

Carlyle, Ruskin, Morris, and Marx

(TITLE)

BY

Marlaina Easton

THESIS

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Abstract

In my Thesis, I will investigate the dominant perceptions of work that spanned the Victorian Period. One of the most important authors of criticism dealing with work in the early part of the Victorian Period was Thomas Carlyle (1845). John Ruskin then became a counterpoint to Carlyle throughout the middle of the century (1862). And although he agreed with much of what Carlyle said, he brings new notions of work to the Victorian Period. William Morris then offered a completely different point of view on the issue of work at the latter part of the Victorian Period (1885). I will discuss the insights of Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin and William Morris.

One of the most important authors of criticism dealing with work in the early part of the Victorian Period was Thomas Carlyle (1845). Carlyle's view of work appears to be rather conservative and rigid compared to later thinkers. John Ruskin then became a counterpoint to Carlyle throughout the middle of the century (1862). And although he agreed with much of what Carlyle said, he brings new notions of work to the Victorian Period. Unlike Carlyle, Ruskin introduces the notion of the worker's feelings. However, readers will detect a conservative Carlyle hidden in Ruskin's words. William Morris then offered a completely

different point of view on the issue of work at the latter part of the Victorian Period (1885). He discusses the workers necessary environment and we begin to see the worker as more of a human being and less of a machine. One cannot examine the Victorian period without discussing its impact on the thought patterns of the latter periods without considering Karl Marx. By reading Marx, readers can see the full impact that work and men like Carlyle and Ruskin had on the laborer's life. A study of the social philosophy of Marx in correlation with the earlier Victorian thinkers will be compared and make clear to the readers how we have arrived to our view of work in the twentieth century.

A new-historical approach is the basis of this thesis. That is, this thesis is presented looking at both canonical and non-canonical texts from the historical perspectives of four prominent authors of the time and studies them within the social context of the Victorian period.

Contents

Introduction

A woman dressed in rags wipes the sweat from a worker's forehead as she holds an infant. Another laborer's muscles strain and vibrate as he shoves coal into a hot smoking oven. A gray haired man takes a deep breath while he stands holding two heavy buckets. And as a man dressed in what appears to be painter's clothes takes a swig of water on a blistering hot workday, a polished man dressed in a black suit, a bow tie, and leather boots watches the display. Ford Madox Brown exhibited this scene in his painting "Work" (1852). This piece of art brings the following questions to mind: Who are the true workers in this society? What is true work? And, Is there something wrong with this picture?

Philosophers have debated about society since the beginning of time. One of the arguments that remains today, and is still dynamic, is the issue of work. Philosophies of "Work" radically changed in the Victorian period. How one defined work proved a battle of clashing ideologies as four prominent thinkers explored "work" as the linchpin of Victorian social philosophy. Tracing the concept of "work" through the writings of Carlyle, Morris, Ruskin, and

Marx provides a startling and vivid "narrative" of nineteenth-century social thought. The transition from one point-of-view to the next forms the core of this study; the results are revolutionary. By the end of the century, what was once considered sacred and holy comes to be regarded as "toil," the task of the dirty, and the immoral—that which should not be seen. The Victorian legacy of such a shift can be seen in contemporary concepts of "work" in the industrialized West.

Richard Altick's Victorian People and Ideas (1973) provides a concise perspective of the period as a whole. Altick discusses interrelated aspects of the Victorian period to show how religion, social problems, laissez-faire and poverty affected both the working class and the aristocracy. Many aspects of the Victorian period influenced the social criticism that was produced. Religion, an important battleground for Victorian thought, had an impact on the temperament and ideas of the nation during the Victorian Period. Many considered the Church of England to be corrupt. The Church of England needed to reestablish its authority in both secular and sacred communities. One of these changes included allowing the power of the church to fall back into the hands of the

bishop or the church's itself. People needed to connect with religion again. People no longer felt as if they were a part of the church. Thus, the Evangelical Movement emphasized the church's connection with the individual, rather than its connection to formality and tradition. Because work affected all of society, religion was connected to the idea of work as well.

Walter Houghton's book The Victorian Frame of Mind (1957) offers a significant study of the Victorian view of work. Throughout Victorian England, the concept of work was changing, and the term and meaning of work became a debate. Excluding the term "God", the term "work" was the most commonly discussed word throughout the Victorian Period. Philosophies of work were expressed in varying ways in writing. It was often described as virtue, duty and gospel: "The glorification of work as a supreme virtue, with the accompanying scorn of idleness, was the commonest theme of the prophets of earnestness" (Houghton 243). Work was also synonymous with misery, injustice, and protest. As the rich fought for their careless self interests, the poor began to loath their class, thus leading to a profound hatred between the classes.

The social problems of the church were few compared to those problems that permeated the working class. Solutions were needed to remedy the inequalities between the classes. One proposed solution was the moral philosophy of Utilitarianism. The encyclopedia Victorian Britain defines Utilitarianism according to Victorian society. This term advanced in England during the Victorian period. Stemming primarily from Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), Utilitarianism emphasized the idea that society should strive to create the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people. Bentham illustrates this point in An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation (1789):

> Because humans are rational and self-interested creatures, they seek to maximize their pleasures and minimize their pains; a morally correct and right action, accordingly, results in greatest possible pleasure within a set of given circumstances. (Mitchell 828)

Utilitarianism impacted English political and social thought and contributed to strong debates among Victorian thinkers.

One note of controversy about Utilitarianism was the thought that the philosophy did not incorporate "sympathy

for the emotional. . . side of life" (Mitchell 828). The suffering of the poor clearly linked with this emotional side of life and, therefore, added to the controversy of Utilitarianism. As the poor class became desperate and impoverished, a new interest in literature brought forth hope along with a platform for discussion. The poor were forced to live on crowded land, in crowded homes (where 6-8 people would sleep in one bed). They lived in extreme poverty and needed some form of escape. The rich prospered at the expense of the poor, and the poor simply became more impoverished. This inequality was only intensified with the laissez-faire policies developing as British capitalism matured. Laissez faire gave employers the right to set the wage for their workers, hire and fire them as they pleased, and to buy and sell goods at the best possible prices. E. J. Hobsbawn in Labouring Men Studies in the History of Labour (1964) discusses the repercussions that laisses-faire had on society. He maintains that the freedom of laissez-faire permitted the poorer classes to be taken advantage of more than ever before:

> The basic principle of the nineteenth-century private enterprise economy was to buy in the cheapest market and to sell in the dearest. For

> the employers to buy labour in the cheapest market implied buying it at the lowest rate per unit, i.e., to buy the cheapest labour at the highest productivity. (Hobsbawm 344)

Because of this "man is a machine capable of production" mentality, the poorer class became poorer and the richer class became richer.

> This clear inequality would always take place as long as employers did not feel the need to promote change. After all, promoting humanity towards the working class might increase moral but would most likely decrease profit: "[I]t was undesirable to encourage workers to demand higher wages and shorter hours, for where would such demands stop? It was safer, if less efficient, to stick to the old ways (Hobsbawn 356)

Therefore, instead of treating the working class as human beings, employers did not object to overworking laborers or working them in ways that they would never consider working themselves. This exhaustive form of productivity included having the working class labor for ridiculous hours, while seldom giving them a break for rest. G. D. H. Cole's work

The Common People 1746-1946 (1964) assembles first-hand observations of Victorian workers:

> The workmen usually labour[ed] six days in the week, and each day the hours of labour [were] from six to six in the factories, and from eight to eight in other occupations, with one hour and a half for meals, and shorter hours on Saturday. But in many occupations longer hours prevail, whilst in some even Sunday work [was] to a certain extent carried on. (Cole 354)

And even though a vigorous work ethic was practiced, workers did not often get the chance to benefit from the sacrifice of their bodies while working. Often times, workers were not allotted the bare essentials in life. Instead, they were denied those things that the rich class had in abundance:

> Meat, as we have seen, was usually outside the range of the laborer's purchasing power, beyond a little bacon, or perhaps an occasional stew. Eden's budgets show many households buying no meat at all . . . Cheese was eaten instead in some parts of the country . . . The Northern labourer, who had potatoes, seems to have tasted

> neither meet nor cheese. As for milk, the labourer saw little of it, even for young children. (Cole 82)

The rich, upon seeing this, often took on a jaded and uncaring attitude toward its effects. Raphael Samuel's work Village Life and Labour (1975) presents writings from literature of the Victorian time period illustrating the attitudes of the rich towards the poor. According to the *Saturday Review* on April third, 1858- the rich reported that . . . "'they [the working class] lived like pigs . . . great boys and girls, mothers and fathers, all sleeping in one room in many instances'. . . [The] 'teaching of bad parents' had an even worse effect on the character of the girls than the bawdy influence of field work and gangs. (Samuel 128). The upper class is clearly disgusted with the scene but is not led to feelings of sympathy or guilt. Nor do they see that their own lives of luxury are the primary cause for the workers' lives of poverty.

As the upper class's image of the poor encompasses coldness and prejudice, the poor themselves best describe the plight of the working class. Crowy Kerry, a member of the working class in the 1900s, details her situation:

> "The houses weren't big enough for us to get beds. . . we used to lay in this bunk . . . sleep in this bunk with our legs out . . . there were only two rooms, you see . . . a little room at the back and one room in the front . . . There was a lot of families, they either had a shed up the garden where two or three of the kids used to sleep or they had an old hovel." (Samuel 142)

Because the rich often overlook the intensive work that is done for their benefit, a Quarry worker must give us a glimpse of the working class's labor:

> "Sometimes they would go . . . perhaps ten or twelve feet under the rock, ready for blasting, they'd get a 'uge piece come down, big as those two houses, put together, then . . . split them up into what they required, large small, thick, thin, long . . . you'd see 'em swinging these 'bout forty pounds hammers over, just like a machine- bang, bang, bang- it marveled me how they managed to split that stuff up as they did." (Samuels 165)

The desperate position of the worker was sentimentalized by the upper class and after allotting a few remarks of

sympathy, the workers' hardships were often forgotten. If the rich did not have to see or read of the hardships of the poor, they found it easier to ignore them. Here is another example of a day in the life of a poor worker:

> Each of the makers had his own working precinct, 'his little cubby place', as one old brick maker described it, with two thatched hurdles 'to keep the sun off your head'. He worked at his own table, from his own pile of clay, and the bricks were regarded as his own until they reached the kiln. ('Should a sudden storm arise during the night, it meant losing your home, going to the yard, and cover up the bricks or risk them being ruined.') Hours, too, were the maker's own, though this was a doubtful liberty when he had to work such very long hours to make up a living wage. (Samuel 170)

The working class was exposed to significant dangers and disasters which were unknown to the upper class:

> It was unpredictable work- everything depended on whether or not rock was encountered- and taking it on '(nearly all piece work' and paid for at the rate of so many shillings to a foot) was

> something of a gamble: 'You'd got to take that with good and bad, you see, you might have a decent digging all the way down- you might come across . . . rock . . . it was a risk all the time. (Samuels 171-172)

The working class was not the only class that was desperate and unstable. Men like Carlyle and Ruskin attempted to alleviate the feeling of helplessness that the workers had. In order to be sure that their own class was secure, they tried to suppress any hostility that the working class may have had through philosophy. Richard Altick in the preface of Past and Present (1843) discusses this desperation: "Unless something were done swiftly and effectively, the country might well see the bitter friction between social classes flame into revolution" (v). He continues:

> Since 1836 England had been suffering from severe economic depression. There was a series of bad harvests, the price of bread was cruelly high, wages were falling, and unemployment was reducing hundreds of thousands of workers to pauperism. For these and other reasons, the anger of the labouring class, already vented over the past several years in sporadic mass meetings and

> disturbances, exploded in a series of strikes and riots. (v)

Victorian writers turned their attention to the subjects of class and work in order to protect their own class. In doing so, they unknowingly began a dialog on the meaning of "work" that would ultimately define them. Thomas Carlyle would be their first spokesman.

Part I

Thomas Carlyle and the Honor of Work

(1795-1881)

In the chapter "Happy," from Past and Present (1843) Carlyle insists that Victorian society is too preoccupied with being happy. When the working class questioned their environment, their role in society, and their clear inequality, Carlyle proposed that they stop thinking about it. He suggests that, if people stopped harping on the notion of being happy, they might actually be happy: "What if we should cease babbling about 'happiness,' and leave it resting on its own basis, as it used to do!" (Past 156). Carlyle maintains that happiness is unachievable by those that interpret and analyze it. In an ideal world, according to Carlyle, human beings would have seen the notion of imagining happiness as a distraction from real life and the discussion of happiness as benign and irrelevant to their actual existence: "'Happy,' my brother? First of all, what difference is it whether thou art happy or not! Today becomes Yesterday so fast, All Tomorrows become Yesterdays; and then there is no question whatever of the 'happiness'" (Carlyle 156). What is most interesting is that Carlyle considered imagining happiness to be a distraction.

However, the poor's vision of happiness as their only motivation to a life of poverty and hardship seems pitiful to Carlyle: "Every pitifulest whipster that walks within a skin has his head filled with the notion that he is, shall be, and by all human and divine laws ought to be, 'happy'" (Carlyle 155). Carlyle may have had the ability to neglect the thought of happiness because it was so within his reach. It appears simple for Carlyle to neglect the thought of happiness possibly because he knows that in life, happiness will come to him: "What if we cease babbling about 'happiness,' and leave it resting on its own basis, as it used to do!" (Carlyle 156). The poor, on the other hand, may have found the thought of happiness to be a constant within their minds like most fantasies that never become reality.

Carlyle feels that people who only tend to look out for their own interests could not possibly be happy: "We plead not for God's justice; we are not ashamed to stand clamoring and pleading for our own 'interests'" (Carlyle 155). Therefore, Carlyle believed that people should see themselves through the eyes of society and not through the eyes of the individual. He argued that people should work for the common good.

Carlyle, in maintaining that all should work "for the common good," leaves readers with a notion of an equal society. Yet he argues that there should be a distinct working class servile to the class that he, himself, is a part of: "Man, little as he may suppose it is necessitated to obey superiors. He is a social being in virtue of this necessity; nay he could not be gregarious otherwise" (Carlyle 241). It is also clear that the working class is only working for the "common good" of Carlyle's class or the class above theirs and that they do not reap the benefits of their labor. This point seems obvious to a modern reader, and must have been to Carlyle as well. Carlyle insisted that the working class should not be motivated simply by self-elevation because they should lack individual wants. Instead, they should be motivated by societal elevation. In other words, the working class should not attempt to transcend their poverty, but should instead, continue to work hard to benefit a society where they are on the margins:

> Sure enough, of all the paths a man could strike into, there is, at any given moment, a best path for every man; a thing which, here and now, if where of all things wisest for him to do. . .

> This path, to find this path and walk in it, is the one thing needful for him" (Carlyle 217).

Once the worker finds his path as a worker, Carlyle insists that this is his one "needful" duty in the world. Whether the worker is happy in this path or not, does not seem important to Carlyle. Carlyle asserted that those things that only benefit the individual and place a burden on members of society should be omitted or transformed into something that benefits a larger scale of society. As this may sound hopeful, Carlyle is not proposing that a rich class that prospers at the expense of a poor class be eliminated.

Carlyle made his connection clear, that work will make a man happy and that the only thing that should make him unhappy is if he should not be able to work: "The only happiness a brave man ever troubled himself with asking much about was, happiness enough to get his work done. . . It is, after all, the one unhappiness of man. That he cannot work; that he cannot get his destiny as a man fulfilled" (Carlyle 157). To Carlyle, the main issue in society was not money, class, or government. It was work. He attempts here to propose that one can logically separate

money from class and the preceding from work: "Of a truth, if man . . . would cease criticizing his victuals to such extent; and criticize himself rather, what he does with his victuals!" (Carlyle 158). He asserts that it is logical to work and never question why this work does not alleviate poverty and why hard work does not allow for advancement in class. Carlyle insists, as well, that instead of looking towards money and issues of class for peace or motivation, people should, instead, look at work as being able to motivate, calm, unite, educate, stabilize, and content society as a whole: "The man is now a man. The blessed glow of Labour in him, is it now a purifying fire, wherein all poison is burned up, and of sour smoke itself there is made bright blessed flame" (Carlyle 196). He manages to ignore the fact that the working class cannot be calm, stable, or content if they cannot afford to eat or take care of their families. He maintains that a utopian society is one that focuses on work, but he overlooks the notion that a blissful existence is not one where work does not realistically bring peace of mind or security.

In the most condescending portion of Carlyle's argument, work is a form of therapy, a form of stress relief. Carlyle affirmed that work in the long run brings a

man peace within himself. Through work, a man can feel as though he has no problems in the world. All problems will disappear once a man is set to work: "Consider how in even the meanest sorts of Labour, the whole soul of a man is composed into a kind of real harmony, the instant he sets himself to work" (Carlyle 196)! Carlyle is convinced that the thoughts of the physical pain that the working class feels on a daily basis, their hungry children, and there overcrowded homes should realistically disappear once they begin working:

> Doubt, Desire, Sorrow, Remorse, Indignation, Despair itself, all these like hell-dogs lie beleaguering the soul of the poor dayworker, as of every man: but he bends himself with free valour against his task, and all these are stilled, all these shrink murmuring far off into their caves. (Carlyle 196)

Today, as the working class did then, we look at work as being an everyday contributor to our stressful lives. In Carlyle's view, working every day should have promoted relief, not stress. He declared that the working class would benefit from seeing work as a temporary calm from the world around it. Workers should have looked forward to

going to work because they would feel that when a day of work was over, they would be relieved and benefited overall.

In Carlyle's argument, work was also looked at as a form of education. Schools should not attempt to teach individuals about themselves. The working class should have, instead, learned who they were once they began working. Work would give a person her true place in society: "Work . . . is in communication with Nature; the real desire to get Work done will itself lead one more and more to truth, to Nature's appointments and regulations, which are truth" (Carlyle 196). Carlyle insisted that this knowledge would become the catalyst to educating the individuals about themselves. Carlyle states, in the chapter "Labour" from Past and Present, that work will make a person more knowledgeable about life and about himself, "...from his inmost heart awakens him to all nobleness,- to all knowledge. 'Self-knowledge' and much else, so soon as Work fitly begins" (Carlyle 197). Carlyle insists that teaching individuals about themselves is unproductive: "Think it not thy business, this of knowing thyself; thou art an unknowable individual: know what thou canst work at; and work at it" (Carlyle 196). This attitude contributes to

the workers' indifference. If people do not focus on themselves as individuals, but rather as a unit to a larger society, then they do not see their own suffering as Carlyle desires:

> Truly, I think the man who goes about pothering and uproaring for his 'happiness,'- pothering, and were it ballot-boxing, poem making, or in what way soever fussing and exerting himself,- he is not the man that help us to 'get our knaves and dastards arrested!' No; he rather is on the way to increase the number (Carlyle 157).

Here, Carlyle held an obvious contempt for those people who "exert themselves" by questioning their happiness and attempting to communicate these blatant distinctions of class. Possibly, Carlyle would have preferred that the working class not be able to understand the distinction between their existence and the class above them. If this inequality goes unnoticed, then a rebellion is not probable. The last thing that Carlyle, as well as others within his class, wanted was an uprising of the working class:

> Certain farther observations, from the same invaluable pen, on our never-ending changes of

> mode, our 'perpetual nomadic and even ape-like appetite for change and mere change' in all the equipments of our existence, and the 'fatal revolutionary character' thereby manifested, we suppress for the present. (Carlyle 216).

Carlyle states in, "Reward" from Past and Present that not only can work gain man true happiness but that work will bring man the true rewards of life. Carlyle contends that people who are strong and who work hard will automatically receive the goods of life (Carlyle 206). According to Carlyle, work should be looked at as being one of the noblest things that one could possibly do: "O brother, if this is not 'worship,' then I say, the more pity for worship; for this is the noblest thing yet discovered under God's sky. Who art thou that complainest of their life of toil? Complain not" (Carlyle 202). Again, Carlyle maintained that workers should not have a right to complain about or to change their hard lives of toil.

Carlyle tried to prove that those who work the hardest would be seen as the most honorable. They would have seen themselves as being dignified, and this would bring them an overwhelming sense of inner pride. This would be their reward. Carlyle is trying to convince his readers that

those who are not hard workers, and know that they do not persevere for society in the form of work, will suffer from low self-esteem and self worth: "One monster there is in the world: the idle man" (Carlyle 203). They would not respect themselves, nor would they be respected by society.

Not only does work lead to happiness, but it also, according to Carlyle, purifies the soul. Carlyle argued that he saw work as a form of religion; he gave work the titles of holy and precious. In the essay "Reward," Carlyle emphasizes that work must be a form of worship because it involves "...'Agony of bloody sweat,' which all men have called divine" (Carlyle 202). Carlyle contends, "All true work is sacred..."(Carlyle 202). Going to work on a daily basis, whether it is dirty, monotonous, or difficult, should be a daily necessary act of worship. And it should be done as a needed opportunity to cleanse the mind and the soul: "'Religion,' I said; for properly speaking, all true Work is Religion . . . Admirable was that of the old monks, 'Laborare est Orare, Work is Worship'" (Carlyle 201).

One of the main aspects of Carlyle's discussion was that work should have been an end in itself, not tied to monetary values. All of the values of work in itself should be honored more than any physical, tangible value. Work

that concentrates on the aspect of money should not be considered true work, nor respected as true work. Carlyle declares, in the essay "Reward," that work in its true meaning of work does not involve money or rewards: "The 'wages' of every noble Work do yet lie in Heaven or else Nowhere" (Carlyle 203). This might also ring hopeful if Carlyle had condemned the aristocracy at any point in his argument. He does not. Readers are again left questioning Carlyle's motives in this assertion. Carlyle may be trying to convince the working class that the notion that they are not making enough income to sustain themselves is not a significant worry. Actually, the idea that they are working and not making enough funds means that they are doing "true work":

> Thou art an unreasonable mortal;- or rather thou art a poor infinite mortal, who, in the narrow clay-prison here, seemest so unreasonable! Thou wilt never sell thy Life, or any part of thy Life, in a satisfactory manner. Give it, like a royal heart; let the price be Nothing. (Carlyle 205).

Carlyle went even further in his argument in arguing that in order to be honorable workers, they should not only work

for minimal pay, but also possibly work for no pay. This should have appeased them and again contributed to their docility and contentment. Carlyle's suggestion that the workers should remain complacent, regardless of their hardships, would soon seem archaic and staid, especially in comparison with other Victorian writers, including one who thought of Carlyle as his mentor: John Ruskin.

Part II

John Ruskin On Justice

(1819-1900)

Like Carlyle, John Ruskin can be considered conservative in his views concerning laborers. He hardly deviated from the stencil of early Victorian thinkers concerning work. On the other hand, it can be argued that he simply took on Carlyle's approach with a more sensitive, less calloused manner. Ruskin introduced the idea of the worker's emotional well being during work in his book Unto This Last (1862). And although his solutions center on the laborer's production and the employer's benefit of this production, he is sure to focus on the employer's necessary actions to guarantee quality production. He did appear to be more liberal compared to Carlyle; however, his views carried us only a short distance toward the present.

Frederick Roe in Victorian Prose (1947) compares Ruskin and Carlyle. He asserts that John Ruskin considered Carlyle to be his teacher: "Ruskin, when referring to his social philosophy, always regarded himself as the pupil and disciple of Carlyle" (Roe 292). Carlyle and Ruskin had many

conservative views in common. One of their most rigid views was that there were men who were superior and that these men should be rulers, and the working class should be followers: "whereas all true sanctity is saving power, as all true royalty is ruling power; and injustice is part and parcel of the denial of such power, which 'makes men as the creeping things, as the fishes of the sea, that have no ruler over them" (Unto 184). Like Carlyle, Ruskin did not declare that the classes should or could ever be equal. He professed that there should be a superior aristocracy and an inferior working class: "If there be any one point insisted throughout my works more frequently than another," Ruskin advises, "that one point is the impossibility of equality" (Ruskin 194). Therefore, at no point was Ruskin attempting to elevate the working class. Instead, he attempted to show the upper class how to best control laborers for production purposes.

Together, Ruskin and Carlyle used education as a false equalizer. Ruskin valued education, but he did not want the working class to gain authority with their education:

> [T]here should be training schools for youth established . . . and that in these schools, the child should . . . imperatively be taught, with

> the best skill of teaching that the country could produce, the following three things:- (a) the laws of health, and the exercises enjoined by them; (b) habits of gentleness and justice; and (c) the calling by which he is to live. (Ruskin 144)

In other words, workers must learn how to stay fit in order to be good workers. They must also learn gentleness in order to make oppression easy. He believed that all classes should be educated. But like Carlyle, Ruskin did not think it progressive that this education should allow the working class to transcend classes: "he had no sympathy with the desire on the part of the lower orders to secure education for the purpose of making themselves the upper orders" (Roe 247).

Both Ruskin and Carlyle argued that a working and productive society could only be one that was separated into two distinctive halves: the aristocracy and the working class: "Ruskin could see an ordered society only as made up of two classes, -- the lordly and the servile, those born to rule and those born to be ruled" (Roe 251). This point is arguably the most condescending point of all,

in that Carlyle and Ruskin discuss religion heavily, and at the same time, profess to know what God intended.

Carlyle and Ruskin also believed that men should be content with their class status regardless of the hardships of poverty or overwork. They should not, by any means, attempt to move up in class:

> We need examples of people who, leaving Heaven to decide whether they are to rise in the world, decide for themselves that they will be happy in it, and have resolved to seek- not greater wealth, but simpler pleasure; not higher fortune, but deeper felicity; making the first possession, self-possession. (Ruskin 225)

Carlyle and Ruskin argue that one should stay in his own class because it is honorable. They did not appear to care whether or not people are happy being in the class that they are in. In other words, neither Carlyle nor Ruskin believed in a transformative society. According to the philosophies of Carlyle and Ruskin, workers should stick to their work and not complain about it, even if their situations are unfair. As Ruskin clearly believes:

> It was the duty of such men—the workers, the servers—to stick to their appointed tasks like good soldiers, and not to meddle with politics and problems of government. It was their duty to render their superiors obedience and reverence. (Roe 252)

Carlyle and Ruskin maintained that the working class should be dependant on the aristocracy for guidance and leadership:

> My continual aim has been to show the eternal superiority of some men to others, sometimes even of one man to all others; and to show also the advisability of appointing more such persons or person to guide, to lead, or on occasion even to compel and subdue, their inferiors, according to their own better knowledge and wiser will. (Ruskin 194)

Clearly, the working class was only seen as a tool for society. Their minds and cravings for justice had no value outside of their production. Ruskin and Carlyle considered the working class or the masses "unenlightened," and "democracy was synonymous with anarchy and must be put down" (Roe 292). Neither man had compassion when it came to

quick change. Both men thought that the best change was slow change. They wanted to take their time with the working class when it came to giving them their rights: "all useful change must be slow" (Roe 293). Both men were terrified of what could take place if the working class gained power; this is illustrated in their arguments.

John Ruskin explored the employer's role in the happiness of the employee in his book Unto This Last (1862). Ruskin appears to be looking for a better working situation and atmosphere for all workers. Rather than dealing with the relationship between the classes, like many Victorian thinkers, Ruskin was concerned with the relationship between the employer and the employee in the workplace. John Ruskin points out many problems and possible solutions in the workplace in his essay "The Roots of Honour". One of Ruskin's main focuses in this essay is the relationship between the employer and the employee. Because these two forces stand on opposite sides of the economic ladder, they almost always fail to come to a meeting of the minds: "Obstinately the masters take one view of the matter; obstinately the operatives another; and no political science can set them at one" (Ruskin 151). Because of this relationship between the two forces, it

seems almost inevitable that they will meet each other with hostility. Ruskin does not believe that this antagonistic relationship always has to exist:

> Disputant after disputant vainly strives to show that the interests of the masters are, or are not, antagonistic to those of the men; none of the pleaders ever seemingly remember that it does not absolutely of always follow that the persons must be antagonistic because their interests are. (Ruskin 151)

Ruskin illustrated how wages impact the employer and the employee. He did not consider that in order for a business to be profitable, the worker had to be sacrificed. Ruskin's argument was that if the best work was done on the worker's behalf and the best price was paid on the employer's behalf, then both interests would automatically be suited for both the employer and the employee. Ruskin's proposal appears plain: if people act with right or just manners, they will achieve the best possible result for all: "It is, indeed, always the interest of both that the work should be rightly done, and a just price obtained for it; but, in the division of profits, the gain of the one may or may not be the loss of the other" (Ruskin 151).

Ruskin uses a relationship between a servant and a master to prove his point. He displays a servant working for a master and the master giving the servant only the bare essentials to keep him working. He does not feed him well, he supplies him with inadequate shelter, and he works the servant right up to the point where he knows that the servant will stay. Ruskin explains that under these circumstances, the master could not get the best work that this worker could supply: "It is not the master's interest to pay wages so low as to leave the men sickly or depressed" (Ruskin 151). The worker will only work up to the capacity that he will remain employed: no more, no less. Ruskin declares that men will only do their absolute best if their souls have motivated them to do so: "It will be done only when the motive force, that is to say, the will or spirit of the creature, is brought to its greatest strength by its own proper fuel; namely, by the affections" (Ruskin 153). In this situation, the servant is not being motivated by his soul. He is being motivated by force.

Ruskin argued that if a worker is handled with true and sincere affection, he will produce more work. The master must also stop simply seeing the worker as a means of producing as much as possible. He must begin to

appreciate the actual work being done along with the worker who is doing it. Ruskin ventures as far to say that a servant ill-treated will be revengeful: "For the servant who, gently treated, is ungrateful, treated ungently, will be revengeful; and the man who is dishonest to a liberal master will be injurious to an unjust one" (Ruskin 154). He also stresses that if employers only treat the servant kindly with the idea of getting a return and not out of human goodness, that the employer will get nothing:

> Treat the servant kindly, with the idea of turning his gratitude to account, and you will get, as you deserve, no gratitude, nor any value for your kindness; but treat him kindly without economical purpose, and all economical purposes will be answered (Ruskin 154).

If the employer treats the employee kindly because the employer knows that it is just, then only justice will come to both the employer and the employee: "But every man may know, and most of us do know, what is a just and unjust act. And all of us may know also, that the consequences of justice will be ultimately the best possible, both to others and ourselves" (Ruskin 152). Ruskin seemed to be attempting to juxtapose true kindness and the desire for

profit. He argued that it is realistic to separate these two ideas. Like Carlyle, Ruskin later maintained in his essay that the working class should be permanently distinct and separate from the other classes. It is difficult to imagine that the higher employer class will treat the working class with sincere affection and kindness when they do not even see them worthy of advancement for their tedious labor. As the employer receives an increase in product because of his "kind" actions, it is not likely that he will practice kindness because of justice. On the other hand, inevitably, his kindness will become as superficial as his affection.

To further demonstrate his argument, Ruskin gives an example of the commander of a regiment and his men. If the commander enters this situation with the objective of doing as little work as possible or being as cold, impartial, and as distant as he can be, then the men will not work as hard as they can for him. However, if he forms a bond with these men and allows them to understand that he will risk his life for them and that he cares about their well being, then he will inevitably produce a regiment of hard-working men. A commander is not searching for profit and is not often motivated by greed. He is, instead, impelled by his

soul for his life. Because his soul is playing an active role in his decision making process, it is more likely that kindness and affection will be exercised. The men of his regiment, because they look to their commander for guidance and their preservation, may also come to respect him and therefore work hard for him. Laborers being seen as profit may not have this reverence to offer their employers. After close scrutiny, this reference rings hollow.

Ruskin introduced the new idea of discussing monetary value. Unlike Carlyle and his overly simplistic attitude concerning money, Ruskin understood its importance. Ruskin did realize that in some situations, direct and constant contact with the worker is not possible. He explained that the best work could still be attainable even in this situation if two points are met. First, the rate of pay might not ever be so changed that workers would be lost or compromised. Second, no matter what is happening with the trade at the time, the men will have permanent jobs (will not be fired for a sacrifice):

> How far it is possible that bodies of workmen may be engaged and maintained at such fixed rates and wages, without enlarging or diminishing their number, so as to give them permanent interest in

> the establishment with which they are connected. (Ruskin 156)

If employers practice this, men will have a sense of their place and importance. With this feeling of significance, they will take pride in what they do and produce the most work possible. Again, Ruskin manages to end his idea with the notion of a possible increase in profit. The irony of Ruskin's discussion is that he is proposing sincerity to a group of men who must be "sold" on the idea with a promise of profit, not justice.

Ruskin proposes that certain regulations must be met to insure fairness among the working class. He believes that the foremost controlling factor in determining who should and should not work is the quality of the work:

> [T]he perfectness and purity of the thing provided; so that, rather than fail in any engagement, or consent to any deterioration, adulteration, or unjust and exorbitant price of what he provides, he is bound to meet fearlessly any form of distress, poverty, or labour, which may, through maintenance of these points, come upon him. (Ruskin 164)

Many factors introduced in laissez faire should come to mind here. This sentiment evokes the two important questions: "What is quality work?" and "How hard will the worker have to work to produce this quality work?" The propensity for employers to continually raise the stakes of quality work would be certain. Again, the upper class would prosper at the expense of the working class.

Ruskin debates that all men should be paid the same amount and the reward of good work should be the ability to work: "The natural and right system respecting all labor is, that it should be paid at a fixed rate, but the good workman employed, and the bad workman unemployed" (Ruskin 399). Readers can imagine a society where the overworked are unemployed and the employed was always on the verge of overwork. Ruskin maintains that, as a society, we should reward those people that act in just manners by hiring them and looking at them with honor. We should penalize them, however, by looking down on them and leaving them unemployed. As the work being done is balanced by the determination of the worker, Ruskin stresses that work should be a continuous activity within society.

At no point did Ruskin propose that workers leave their employers who do not act in just and right manners

unproductive. Nor did he suggest the punishment for employers who are lazy and behaving inhumanly. Ruskin never acknowledged that the only class in the position to punish with profound effects is the upper class. He only propagated more ways to punish that class of workers below them. He also stressed that work should be continuous. Readers are left wondering about the necessity of this argument. The terms "poor class" and "working class" are often used synonymously during the Victorian Period. Ruskin may mean by "continuous work" that the employer should have the right to work the laborer even harder and for longer periods of time.

Like Carlyle, Ruskin writes as a conservative thinker who asserts the status quo. This is made clear in the following quote. "Care is nowise to make more of money, but care to make much of it; remembering always the great, palpable, inevitable fact- the rule and root of all economy- that one person has, another cannot have" (Ruskin 226). Ruskin made his point obvious that those who should have are those in his own class and those who should not have are members of the class that insures that he remains in his station: the working class.

Carlyle and Ruskin did not agree on everything, however. Although, they maintained that men should work, they disagreed when it came to the kind of work. According to Carlyle, work was simply duty, fulfilling a task whether this task was unpleasant or not. Ruskin, on the other hand, believed that men should enjoy their work: "He preached the gospel of joy in creative effort" (Roe 299). Ruskin proposed that men should find themselves in their work:

> Labour is the contest of the life of a man with an opposite;- the term 'life' including his intellect, soul, and physical power . . . labour of good quality, in any kind, includes always as much intellect and feeling as will fully and harmoniously regulate the physical force. (Ruskin 210)

They must be allowed to express themselves in a creative form: "A man must find in his appointed task something more than an expression of duty; he must find in it an outlet for his creative capacities, his loyalties to society, his cravings for fellowship, and even for his spirit of play" (Ruskin 300). Proposing that a laborer during the Victorian period satisfy his "spirit for play" seems superficial and trite, since many laborers did not even have the time or

the opportunity to desire or exercise play. Because of their lack of education, their "creative capacities" were also few. And because of their lack of participation in governmental issues, as Ruskin proposed, they may have had a difficult time being loyal to a society where they were permanently marginalized. Ruskin's contradictions often overshadow his attempts to better society for the working class. However, in ways he could not have known, his writings contributed to the dialogue among Victorian voices that followed him, most especially the voice of William Morris.

Part III

William Morris Moves for Workers

(1834-1896)

Ruskin and Carlyle both held the strong belief that there should be a working, subservient class and a ruling, upper class. William Morris then introduced ideas that were revolutionary compared to those held in the early part of the Victorian period. With his radical views, he was able to open the doors for Karl Marx's extremist propositions. Like Carlyle, Morris believed in the notion that work would bring man true happiness. However, he did not hold the point of view that the poor should automatically value work.

Morris discussed the human being's ability to work and, thereby, achieve true happiness. While Carlyle viewed all work as being intrinsically good and religious, Morris did not see all work as being good: "And, yet, we must say in the teeth of the hypocritical praise of all labour which is so far from being a blessing that it is a curse" (Morris 142). As a humanitarian, Morris saw the man's needs before the needs of work.

Morris was key in the organization of the Socialist League in 1884. Ian Bradley in William Morris and His World (1978) discusses William Morris' political views and describes him as "the greatest socialist of that day" (Bradley 115). Morris did not conclude that the people of this world could live in true happiness unless they are all equally participating in work. He held that all classes within society must be workers. This opinion alone placed Morris in a more contemporary and liberal position than Carlyle and Ruskin. William Morris investigated human dependencies concerning work within the different classes of society.

In the book Signs of Change (1885), William Morris asked two important questions: What is work that is worthy-useful work? And what is work that is useless or unworthy? There are three factors that influence whether work is useful or not: people must feel that there is a time where they will have a substantial rest from their work; they must fulfill their natural need of producing something during work, and they must hope to enjoy the work that they are doing: "What is the nature of the hope which, when it is present in work, makes it worth doing? It is threefold, I think- hope of rest, hope of product, hope in pleasure in

work itself" (Signs 142). In discussing these elements, Morris was introducing the laborer as an emotional being and not simply as a means for production as Ruskin illustrated. Morris explains that there is "good work," which carries with it a sense of hope, and "bad work," where no hope lies: "Thus worthy work carries with it the hope of pleasure in rest, the hope in the pleasure of our using what it makes, and the hope of pleasure in our daily creative skill" (Morris 144).

Morris asserts that work can be either a gift or a burden of life: "Here, you see, are two kinds of work - one good, the other bad; one not far removed from a blessing, a lightning of life; the other a mere curse, a burden to life" (Morris 554). Maintaining that the worker should feel hope during his work places Morris in direct opposition to Carlyle, who asserts that a laborer should not attempt to ever leave his class or "hope" for an alternative social status. Morris debates that if work does not meet these necessary categories, it must be that work of a servant or of a slave: "All other work but this is worthless; it is slave's work- mere toiling to live, that we may live to toil" (Morris 555). Work that displeases man turns him into

a slave of the work, and therefore, Morris believes, unlike Carlyle, that it will never make him happy.

Morris explained that there are three classes that play a large role in work: those who do not work but live off of the people that do- the aristocracy; those that work but consume more than they produce and therefore also live off of the working class-- the middle class, and those that work the hardest and do not receive any of the benefits of what they produce for all of the other groups-- the working class. The aristocracy does not meet the natural human need to produce. Because there is no real work being done, they do not have the need to hope for rest. They do not have enjoyment of their work because they are not working. Consequently, anything that they may consider to be work is not:

> For first, as to the class of rich people doing no work, we all know that they consume a great deal while they produce nothing. Therefore, clearly, they have to be kept at the expense of those who do work, just as paupers have, and are a mere burden on the community (Morris 145).

Therefore, the non-working upper class produces useless toil. The middle class does work, however. Because the

middle class does work, they do and can have a hope for rest. They also have hope of enjoying their work. But the reason their occupation is also considered useless toil is that what they consume outweighs what they produce, so their production means nothing. Their main goal and objective is "gaining" or taking away from society to keep it for themselves and their children:

> And all these we must remember have, as a rule, one aim in view; not the production of utilities, but the gaining of a position either for themselves or their children in which they will not have to work at all . . . the proud position of being obvious burdens on the community. (Morris 147)

The middle class spends most of their lives trying to become a part of the class above them. Therefore, to Morris, the only class that is considered to be doing useful work is the working class. They successfully face all three categories; they work the hardest. Because of this, the working class constantly has the hope for rest. They also have a natural need to produce. Actually, they produce for all of the other classes. They have a hope of eventually enjoying their work as well. Because of the lack

of useful work from the other two classes, the working class will never have the opportunity for rest or enjoyment because work is distributed unequally:

> It is clear that this inequality presses heavy on the 'working' class, and must visibly tend to destroy their hope of rest at least, and so, in that particular, make them worse off than mere beasts of the field. (Morris 145)

According to Morris, because of this inequality, they will be put into a class of inferiority by sacrificing their physical and mental selves. Morris is bold and appears sincere in his reverence of the working class by giving them a hero status of figuratively carrying the other classes on their backs:

> The class that remains to be considered produces all that is produced, and supports both itself and the other classes, though it is placed in a position of inferiority to them; real inferiority, mind you, involving a degradation both of mind and body. (Morris 147)

Morris also carried the opinion that much of the work being done by the working class was unnecessary. Those

people in the aristocracy, at times, have more money than they can even spend. Every physical need that they have is being met. Therefore, this constant need of producing more is, at times, not necessary. Morris contends that there is not a true demand for the working class's labor:

> Next there is a mass of people employed in making all those articles of folly and luxury, the demand for which is the outcome of the existence of the rich non-producing classes; things which people leading a manly and uncorrupted life would not ask for or dream of. (148)

It is done, however, to keep the working class in their inferior position and to keep the aristocracy elevated. Morris suggests that the aristocracy "forces the other to work for it and takes from this inferior class everything that it can take from it, and uses the wealth so taken to keep its own members in a superior position" (557). If the aristocracy keeps the working class constantly producing, the aristocracy will keep the working class always deprived. If the rich can keep the poor inferior, the aristocracy will remain in that class that is privileged. Morris took the opportunity to illustrate the injustices of society bluntly.

Morris was striving for a solution to erase inequalities to assure that all classes are doing useful work and that the majority of society's hopes would be met. The first step that he thinks must be taken is to do away with the aristocracy and to turn them into working men so that some of the burden of the working class can be lifted: "The first step then to be taken is to abolish a class of men privileged to shrink their duties as men, thus forcing others to do the work which they refuse to do" (153). And although this idea provoked sincere agreement among some people, it was as unrealistic as Ruskin suggesting that the rich never take advantage of the poor. Morris likewise concedes that we cannot sacrifice our pleasure of work because of the need to produce:

> As long as the work is repulsive it will still be a burden which must be taken up daily, and even so would mar our life, even though the hours of labour were short. What we want to do is to add to our wealth without diminishing our pleasure. Nature will not be finally conquered till our work becomes a part of the pleasure of our lives. (Morris 154-155)

He acknowledged that the pleasure of work can be kept if men adopt the point of view of "Popular Art." Workers must view their production as not just profitable, but valuable. They must take pride in the things that they produced and, therefore, enjoy the work that they are doing. This idea is questionable because readers acknowledge that the workers cannot often afford their own productions and, therefore, having them sincerely value this production may bring a sense of melancholy.

To minimize the unhappiness and exploitation of the workers, Morris suggested that we have to eliminate the idea of a "false demand" and that only those things that are in real demand should be produced. A real demand will insure that unnecessary useless toil is not being done: "we might all work at 'supplying' the real 'demands" (Morris 559). Work that is not enjoyable or disliked could be endured under this circumstance. Morris also notes that variety in work is invaluable. He strives to omit the monotony of work: "To compel a man to do day after day the same task, without any hope of escape or change, means nothing short of turning his life into a prison-torment" (Morris 162). According to Morris, diversified work may be ensured through education. He concludes that education can

bring about social order and thereby teach people new things:

> One thing that will make this variety of employment possible will be the form that education will take in a socially ordered community . . . The amount of talent, and even genius, which the present system crushes, and which will be drawn out by such a system, would make our daily work easy and interesting. (Morris 163).

If through education, people can teach one another to do new and diverse things, they can work in a variety of fields. They can focus on different aspects of work and their capabilities rather than focusing on making money doing one monotonous thing.

Morris discussed the idea of educating the worker outside of work. Unlike Carlyle and Ruskin, Morris thought that the worker is worthy of education, and this idea distinguishes Morris as more progressive than earlier Victorian thinkers. To avoid monotony, Morris also proposes that men must have a shorter workday: "It is clear that with work unwasted it can be short. It is clear also that much work which is now a torment, would be easily endurable

if it were shortened" (Morris 162). Here, Morris actually appeared to be concerned for the worker as opposed to the needs of the employer. Lastly, he reasons that the surroundings of the worker while at work must be fitting. They must allow for an enjoyable atmosphere: "Beginning by making their factories, buildings, and sheds decent and convenient like their homes, they would infallibly go on to make them not merely negatively good, inoffensively merely, but even beautiful" (Morris 167). Someone, while working, should not feel isolated, or disconnected from the beautiful, natural world just because they are at work. Finally, Morris introduced the worker not as a machine, but as a being that could not only perceive beauty but could also be connected to it. Neither Ruskin nor Carlyle offered this insight, of course, but when Morris privileged the human worker in his writings, he anticipated the final voice in this study, that of Karl Marx.

Part IV

Karl Marx: the Victorian Radical

(1818-1883)

One of the best ways to understand Karl Marx is to compare his ideas to those of Thomas Carlyle. While Carlyle represents almost archaic nineteenth-century views, Marx's ideas reflect more accurately the twentieth-century attitude toward work and workers.

Carlyle's ideas opposed Karl Marx's "Alienated Labour" (1844) on the issue of work. Marx offered readers of the Victorian Period a perspective that was new and contested by many during the period. While Carlyle believed that all work is good and religious, Marx argues that work can be both harmful and unequal. Carlyle states that, "...a man protects himself by working" (Carlyle 196). Marx explains that not only does work not protect man, but it also turns him into a victim in a capitalistic society: "Rising wages awake in the worker the same desire for enrichment as in the capitalist, but he can only satisfy it by the sacrifice of his body and spirit" ("Alienated" 291). These two philosophers even had opposing opinions on the outcome of

work. Carlyle contends that work in time brought a man peace within himself. All problems will disappear once a man is set to work. He also stated in his piece, "Reward," that people who are strong and who will work hard will automatically receive the goods of life:

> Show me a people energetically busy; heaving, struggling, all shoulders at the wheel; their heart pulsing, every muscle swelling, with man's energy and will;- I show you a people of whom great good is already predictable; to whom all manner of good is yet certain, if their energy endure. (Carlyle 199)

On the contrary, Marx maintains that work would turn a man into a servant of society. The outcome of servitude would bring with it a reduced sense of self in the worker and to the society that surrounds him. He not only decided that good could not be the outcome, but that bad health and death were inevitable. Marx sees death of the worker as being the outcome of a society of exploitation and inequalities:

> Thus, even in the state of society which is most favorable to the worker, the inevitable result for the worker is overwork and premature death,

> reduction to a machine, enslavement to capital which accumulates in menacing opposition to him, renewed competition and beggary or starvation for a part of the workers. (Marx 293)

Carlyle stated that work would make a person more knowledgeable about life and about himself. However Marx contested that rather that producing a more knowledgeable person, it objectifies him.

Marx does not believe that labor was religious like Carlyle. Instead, he sees labor under capitalism as producing an evil: "Labour does not only create goods; it produces itself and the worker as a commodity" (Marx 303). Carlyle introduces another piece, "Reward", where he considered work a religion, "...all true Work is Religion... Work is Worship" (Carlyle 202). Karl Marx did not see work as any kind of a religion; rather, he considered work to be superficial. He argued that work revolved around money and product and that to some degree, the worker would also revolve around material goods. He debated that the worker would not come to worship work as a God but that he would begin to see work as being a foreign, hostile, and outside force. Marx discusses that work

separates the worker from himself. Work, according to Marx, turns the worker into an object of work:

> The alienation of the worker in his product means not only that his labour becomes an object, assumes an external existence, but that it exists independently, outside himself, and alien to him, and that it stands opposed to him as an autonomous power. . . therefore, the worker becomes a slave of the object. (Marx 303)

Carlyle does not conclude that work involves money or rewards. "...Labour is ever an imprisoned god, writhing unconsciously or consciously to escape out of Mammonism" (Carlyle 207). Marx, on the other hand, recognizes that what the struggling working class strives for is money. Marx observes that it is automatic that work will involve a struggle with money. "Wages are determined by the bitter struggle between capitalists and worker" (298).

Where Ruskin's ideas differed from Carlyle's was where Karl Marx shares ideas with Ruskin. It seems hard to believe that anyone who agreed with Carlyle could also have agreed with Karl Marx. Amazingly so, John Ruskin echoed some of the opinions of both Karl Marx and Thomas Carlyle. Marx and Ruskin agreed on many things. Karl Marx considered

the feelings of the workers like John Ruskin. Marx debated that the worker should not be mistreated and taken advantage of. He did not want the worker to become sick and overworked at the hands of his master: "To be sure, labour produces marvel for the wealthy but it produces deprivation for the worker. It produces palaces, but hovels for the worker. It produces beauty, but mutilation for the worker" (Marx 291). Although Marx is considering the worker's feelings, not workers' productivity, Marx and Ruskin together saw society "as an organic whole, composed of mutually dependant units, acting together in harmony for common ends, under state control" (Roe 245).

Because of this shared view, both Ruskin and Marx are clearly socialists by modern standards. This socialist attitude stands out in their assertion that property and land should be owned by whoever could use it: "This new formulation of the problem already contains its solution. The general relation to private property [has] its relation to truly human property" (Marx 300). Ruskin and Marx both condemned the extravagance of the aristocracy. However, Marx's proposed solutions would not take place at the expense of the worker, as Ruskin's often would have.

After reading these authors, William Morris and Karl Marx begin to look very similar in views outside of Carlyle and Ruskin. Marx does not see all work as being good. In fact, Marx discusses how work can be disastrous for not only society, but for the world: "The increase in value of the world or things is directly proportional to the decrease in value of the human world" (Marx 289). Morris, likewise, did not agree that work was a form of religion that made life better. Marx and Morris debated that work tended to be hard on the working class and often unnecessary. They argued that everyone within society should have worked together to better society.

Equality of all men was important to these thinkers. Marx and Morris both wrote of ways to better the world for the working class. They had a humanistic view of the world around them. Because of this, they were able to notice the mistreatment and inequalities of the working class, unlike Carlyle and Ruskin. Morris and Marx wanted work to be useful and enjoyable for all men. They did not want men to be alien to their products: "The product of labor is labor embodied and made objective in a thing . . . this realization of labor appears as the diminution of the worker . . . and the appropriation as alienation, as

externalization" (Marx 289). Carlyle and Ruskin managed to ignore the fact that the classes were warring with one another. Marx and Morris, however, realized that there were major problems that existed between the classes. Their goal was to challenge these problems and not to ignore them like Ruskin and Carlyle. Marx and Morris were socialists in that they were aware of the exploitation of the working class. They wanted everyone in society to have the opportunity to improve the quality of their lives.

Karl Marx had many ideas that placed him in his own category altogether. Neither Ruskin nor Carlyle believed in the equality of men as Marx does. Marx suggested a need for society to see people as being of equal value. Today, readers often link Karl Marx to our skewed view of communism. But through his writing we can imagine that he believed in a community where everyone would have had the opportunity to not only live but also to enjoy life.

Unlike Carlyle and Ruskin, Marx did not propose that society should be separated into two parts: the aristocracy and the working class. He concluded that a productive world was one where everyone worked and where there was no aristocracy. All men, according to Marx, must have taken their part in the world as workers so that men were not

overworked at the expense of an upper class. He argued that all men had a right to an education and that they should have been able to transcend classes if they wished to.

Conclusion: Continuing Centuries with Hope

Like Marx once suggested, and Carlyle opposed, we feel that if we work hard we will be able to move to a higher class. This last notion also carries controversy. Today, the working class is still attempting to escape their own class because it still struggles with a variety of inequalities in our society. If workers were esteemed and treated with honor, this liberation from class might not be necessary.

Readings about labor and workers of the Victorian period, beginning with Carlyle, ironically remind readers of the foremost sentiment that Carlyle opposed: change. We are also reminded that hope, in essence, transcends the periods of our history and must permeate our souls in the present. Like the basic needs of life, hope is necessary for society, not simply in the poor class that still exists, but with all people that are exposed to an unstable, unequal, divided, and capitalistic society. Therefore, readers must understand that, as survival was a debate then, it will continue throughout our lifetimes and lives to come, regardless of class. Through the words of Carlyle, Ruskin, Morris, and Marx, we can begin to

understand the nature of work, hope, and change during their time, and into our own.

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